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REMARKS

Claims 1 and 10 are amended, and claims 9 and 16 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. No new matter is added by these amendments. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and allowance of all claims in view of the amendments above and the remarks that follow.

Claims 1-3 and 6-16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as unpatentable over Masegi et al. (US 5,369,574). Applicant respectfully submits the claims are patentable over Masegi because all of the claim elements are not taught or suggested by Masegi.

Claims 1 and 10 recite: "the statistical model comprises a decision tree," which is not taught or suggested by Masegi. The Office Action relied on the Masegi "limitation storing unit 408" for a statistical model. But, the Masegi limitation storing unit 408 stores a table, not a decision tree, as can be seen in Masegi at Table 2 (columns 7 and 8) and column 9, lines 12-19. A table does not teach or suggest the "decision tree" of claim 1.

Claims 1 and 10 further recite: "building a statistical model," which is not taught or suggested by Masegi because the limitations in the Masegi limitation storing unit 408 are "stored beforehand," as recited at Masegi, column 9, lines 12-13. Thus, the Masegi limitations are predetermined beforehand, and Masegi makes no mention of and does not teach or suggest the Masegi limitations ever being produced via "building," as recited in claims 1 and 10.

Claims 1 and 10 further recite: "building a statistical model from a plurality of pre-determined pairs of semantic representations and associated expressions," which is not taught or suggested by Masegi because the Masegi limitations stored in the Masegi limitation storing unit 408 and described in Table 2 (columns 7 and 8) are unrelated to the Masegi semantic representations shown in Fig. 5, as described at Masegi column 7, line 66. The Masegi semantic representations shown in Fig. 5 represent the sentence "Because snow had been falling since morning ... ." as recited at Masegi column 8, lines

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38-42. In contrast, the Masegi limitation storing unit 408 contains limitations such as "number of connections in sentence" and "number of relative-clause." Thus, the Masegi limitations are not built from the Masegi semantic representations. Instead, the Masegi limitations are predetermined, or "stored beforehand." Masegi, column 9, lines 12-13. Hence, the Masegi limitation storing unit 408 and the Masegi semantic representations do not teach or suggest "building a statistical model from a plurality of pre-determined pairs of semantic representations and associated expressions," as recited in claims 1 and 10.

Claims 2-3, 6-8, and 11-15 are dependent on claims 1 and 10, respectively, and are patentable over Masegi for the reasons argued above, plus the elements in the claims.

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Conclusion

Applicant respectfully submits that the claims are in condition for allowance and notification to that effect is earnestly requested. The Examiner is invited to telephone Applicant's attorney (651-645-7135) to facilitate prosecution of this application.
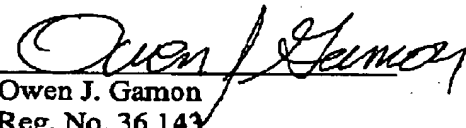
If necessary, please charge any additional fees or credit overpayment to Deposit Account No. 09-0465.

Respectfully submitted,

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By their Representative,

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CERTIFICATE UNDER 37 CFR 1.8: I hereby certify that this correspondence is being transmitted via facsimile to the Commissioner for Patents 703-872-9306, on this 13th day of October, 2004.

Owen J. Gamon
Name   Signature